

Art Tales

A Unique Contest
for Creative Writers

2010
Contest
Winners



CITY OF
VENTURA
COMMUNITY SERVICES
Cultural Affairs
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Second Annual

Art Tales

**A Unique Contest for
Creative Writers**

The City of Ventura is pleased to sponsor, in partnership with E.P. Foster Library, a creative contest for local writers. The competition invites writers to submit an original short story or poem that was inspired by one of the Municipal Art Collection works of art currently on exhibit on the second floor of the E.P. Foster Library in downtown Ventura.

In an effort to make the City's art collection more accessible to the community, the City of Ventura joined with E.P. Foster Library to provide an exhibit space for a limited number of works, which are rotated annually. Each piece in this year's assortment of artwork challenges the viewer to puzzle over the work's meaning and provides an excellent opportunity for students and adults alike to exhibit their written skills while learning about viewing works of art. This contest is a call for imaginative and inventive people to examine a work of art and then write a short story or poem reflecting their unique interpretation.

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FIRST PLACE: ADULT: SHORT STORY

Late Night Coffee

By Donald Sommerfield

Sometimes the world just flies faster than you can track it, and by the time you ask why, the screen door has slammed shut and the evening sun is broken in so many places you can't grasp the meaning or the metaphor any more. So you settle in just a little, but you don't get too comfortable, because damn it, the shadows of your life will come soon enough. No need to hurry it along.

Tony's Pizzeria. What a place. Tall trees, old benches, small old building. Every time I drive by it now, along Thompson Blvd., I am reminded of a world in slow motion when the family car brought us out this way from San Diego. My parents were young, energetic and full of beans. So was I. Not my brother. At five years of age, his focus dwelt on cartoon characters and his favorite cereal at the time, Fruit Loops.

As we made our way toward Grandma and Grandpa outside San Francisco, Mom and Dad would stop at Tony's, grab some steaming black coffee, switch places driving and jet away in our two-tone '57 Chevy. Driving all night was no problem for them: the company they kept was the best. Listening to the late night radio, I slept on the floorboard, on top several blankets Mom had made up for me, while Bruce slept on the backseat. I don't recall being happier.

I can still hear the clakety-clak of the car wheels going over the highway, the entire car as excited to get there as we were. I often drifted off to sleep in dreams of delight with those bumpy wheels lolling me to sleep.

My Dad (call him Bob) was a Navy guy; my Mom (call her Barbara) a beautician. I always accused them of being joined at the hip, and it certainly seemed that way. They never fought in front of us, made decisions about us that always caught us by surprise, and took us everywhere with them. Besides, they knew we loved going to Grandma and Grandpa's place, because they would treat us like the princes we knew we were.

Mom always watched me with one eye, as if she weren't quite sure I was really from the same planet as everyone else. Our grandparents fussed over us. Dad played ball with me, and Bruce amused himself endlessly, ignoring me as much as possible. I was entering adolescence, so he really didn't care much for my attitude. Brothers are a pain.

Several times throughout the years we made that trip, always slightly awed, slightly unsure of what lie ahead. Stopping at Tony's was a must. I always made sure I was awake, just in case I could convince one of the parents to pick up some munchies or a soda. When you're a kid, those things are mighty important.

Then something odd happens: you grow up! You can't wait to get there, to get out of the house, and if you make it into middle age, you wonder where in hell the time went, and why you are where you are and why, why, why. Once again you are caught off-guard. The shrillness you hear is your own voice in a wilderness of your own making.

I got the call from my brother, that I was needed to help Dad take care of Mom. She had suffered a stroke, and I did not know what that meant exactly until I saw her tiny body trapped in that wheelchair — I was shocked and deeply saddened at her condition. "Your feelings are nothing," my brother told me, "compared to what she must be feeling and going through every day."

Our schedule ran something like this: every minute. Period. Go back to their place, sleep and eat some, then make the run back to the convalescent home and practically wrestle Mom to the floor. What was going on here? She struggled every minute to speak, but the words were trapped somewhere, while her body struggled against becoming obsolete. I had always admired my mom for the way she worked hard during her life, and now this was the greatest test of all. Her right arm was dead for good. She couldn't walk, and she couldn't stand up on her own. "Be patient," Dad would tell her. For a vibrant woman who had worked on her feet in beauty salons for more than forty-five years, that must have been quite a blow to everything she believed in, a terrible irony even she could not comprehend. I did not have the guts she had.

My dad is eighty-six and still has all his hair. How did he do what he did day in and day out? His constant energy, his refusal to give up against enormous odds, made him a rock for my mom, and inspired awe in me. Besides, she was the love of his life. They came from the stock of a generation that knew what a good work ethic meant, and they never gave up. The world tilted away sometimes for them, but their diligence paid off. He once told me, "Well, this is our life, our burden. Why complain?"

But Dad had become difficult and cantankerous, something I hadn't seen in him before, which troubled me. I would ask questions and he would get defensive, then realize I really didn't know what to expect. He told me, "Expect the unexpected." End of conversation.

Yet when I got home late, he was still up, asleep sometimes in his big comfort chair, waiting for me to report in on Mom's progress. Only then did I witness his exhaustion.

He was up early every day and out the door, ran errands and then went out to be with Mom 24/7, as she fought to regain a shred of dignity in a new world of useless language and insult from injury. Her fury knew no bounds, and Dad took a lot of it, even weeks before I arrived to relieve him of the constant battle my mother fought to overcome.

I was only there five weeks, but my dad soldiered on, staying with Mom, taking her abuse, her invective. He would tell me, after she would slur words of an unkind nature, "That's the stroke talking."

I stayed with her most nights until she fell asleep, but that didn't always work, especially when the medications wore off. In dim light, she would reach out to smack me, as she had done to Dad and Bruce.

We knew her fury was all about trying to find a level of normality. I stayed with her through physical therapy; an arduous task of lifting the good arm, then the legs, one at a time, over and over, with the help of staff. I fed her, which she hated. I walked her in the wheelchair down the corridors, while old women sat in their wheelchairs staring off into space, often calling out for family members that would never appear.

I tried to keep her in bed at night, adjusting her bedding over and over. She labored to get up, fighting gravity, her body now too heavy for her, but there was no way she could stand on her own yet. She was insistent about getting up, hating the uncomfortable bed she was in, hating the way her life had come crashing in on her. She flailed about often, her movements out of sync with what she wanted to accomplish — to get out of bed, to get out of the building and go home.

Her frustration and humiliation ran deep and tormented her daily.

Stroke victims always feel lost. Everything is just out of reach. When you can barely talk, the anger building up seems even more perverse and hapless. “Why did this happen to me?” is the constant refrain. But my dad never shied away, stayed at Mom’s side, even when she showed great resentment toward him and the staff that watched after her. His face showed little of the pain and stress he was feeling, as he kept a vigilant eye on Mom, protecting and hovering, protecting and hovering. He knew there were moments she wanted to give up and fade away, but he wouldn’t let her, couldn’t let go of her. It was a daunting task for both of them. I made little difference in the scheme of things — there to help but always feeling uneasy and helpless myself. One look at the two of them in their courageous battle humbled me, and I would suddenly stop feeling sorry for my predicament.

As she progressed, there were days of lucid recovery, and sudden, unexpected kindnesses on her part. As Mom regained some balance in her mind if not in her body, she would look over at me with half a grin and say haltingly, “Good to be back.”

After several difficult weeks she was able to go home. Rested, she did all the therapy necessary to keep her moving and motivated. Dad is relieved they are back. Like I said, joined at the hip.

So when I drive by Tony’s Pizzeria, I get a catch in my throat. I can still smell the late night coffee, hear their voices discussing the day’s events as they drive, hear that gentle clakety-clak of the wheels over pavement — and hear my brother’s soft breathing as he sleeps.

Inspired by Tony’s Pizza by Stephen Schafer



SECOND PLACE: ADULT: SHORT STORY

You Stand like a fool Watching

by Sean Daly

You are so done but there is nowhere to turn to no one to talk to holding it all together well over the years but your brother has never really changed and yet you stand like a fool watching him walk out like you can take care of mom as if she was so easy doesn't he know anything about her disease and what is required is it out of ignorance or is he really that selfish that he thinks a single parent can so easily take care of an elderly mom with her mental drifting and her freewheeling tongue only a resemblance of the mom her dignity stripped down her identity robbed and you are so hot mad you see red but of course you play it cool don't want to make a scene speak out of turn topple the apple cart over never stopped playing the part of the good sister the good daughter never asked yourself really what is it that you want even after the kids came and the house and minivan and then of course the separation and the starting over you forget to include yourself in it somehow all coming together in your head you're so beside yourself that this meeting this ambush really set up by your brother on his terms could so easily turn into a dump laced with all of his charm and arm twisting that never feels like it until later like now as you watch what a manipulation he pulled tapping into your caring nature mining that reservoir of good intention and you tell yourself you're not going to take the ticket not signing up for his bull anymore the nerve of him with his sweet voice that makes you sick and you can so easily be moved to take the position in the family as the care taker the one to figure it all out and yet was it out of shock or shame same old same old everybody playing their role that you didn't speak your peace do you really lack the necessary tools your education your leadership skills your MBA rendered useless whenever the family is together and you don't know whether to kick yourself or give yourself a break laugh or cry to think that he can still bully you at your age and you know in the end you'll just tell yourself something to make yourself comfortable with the decision that he will make then and there and you can't really talk to anyone about it run it by your friends who have heard it all before and then do it again and again embarrassed to bring up the fact that another meeting with your brother resulted in him getting his way and the other brother the youngest brother like a de-facto sibling who lives back east and isn't even part of the conversation in the end this is just an exercise in avoiding the real question regarding Mom and how can she move in you can barely look after your own teenage daughter and the stakes are so high trying your best to get her into a good college that you can afford and to take care of an Alzheimer patient what an awful thing to say about your

mother "patient" your dad must be turning in his grave and yet he knew what your brother was like warned you in away to not be cajoled when it came to placing mom and yet who knew that he would have gone first dad must have had an intuition that he didn't let on to and you know you could take her in for a while that the drifting at night the memory loss the disorientation when it gets bad enough will force your hand and then you'll have that meeting with your brother who you know in your heart of hearts loves mom but in a calculating way counting her money and hoping for the inheritance to still be there at least partially and aren't you now just thinking the worst always because you never learned to speak your mind say your bit and be done judgment aside you just loved to be stepped on rolled over pushed aside is it some latent guilt you have about being the oldest the responsible one the Stanford graduate you've stopped thinking about all of that now that your brother is gone and walked away left in his car now the important thing is to look after Mom in the end you shouldn't complain she won't be around long she really should be placed and you know you won't be able to manage her for any length of time and it all happened so fast it's all such a blur to you moms decline and your daughters growing up and how can you expect to look after both is it possible to give them both the care they need and you tell yourself your only one person a person who knows she will do what is best and put herself second and probably kick herself for a time but you're good at that it's been your pattern in the family must be a left over vestige from evolution or learned through osmosis from the very mom in question so you keep your mouth closed and don't chase your brother into the parking lot and scream at him you know that you're not in control that your bother is your brother and your mom isn't your mom anymore but you'll take care of her as best as you can until placing her is no longer an option until the choice is taken away but next time you'll be ready for your brother and his crazy ideas and manipulation and know that life is a kaleidoscope a flash of color a flurry of events and people moving from one stage to the next you just have to promise yourself that you will say enough is enough hold on a minute next time your brother tries to push something on you.

Inspired by "Sally Weber" by Donna Granata



HONORABLE MENTION: ADULT: SHORT STORY

Eulogy in a Rainbow

By Sharon Wilson

My wife was a collector, and not a particularly picky one. Over the years I was able to form a vague understanding of the guidelines she used to determine whether or not a thing was worth adding to her cache of trinkets and knick-knacks. From what I could tell, she deemed an item to be worth keeping so long as it met at least one of her qualifying criteria, which were: It was given to her by someone she loved; she purchased it as a souvenir while on vacation; someone she knew purchased it as a souvenir while on vacation; it commemorated in some way an event of some kind; it was shaped like a frog, butterfly, cat, hummingbird, or flower; or, it was pretty. Like I said, she wasn't picky.

By the time we retired to Arizona, her hoard had grown so large that the most practical approach to storage, since she rejected my suggestion of boxes in the attic, was simply to designate one room of the house as her curio display. I don't recall how it came about, but we eventually ended up calling it the sewing room, which was odd since she didn't do any sewing there, or anywhere else for that matter. She decided on the room at the southern end of the house because it had windows on every wall but the one leading back into the rest of the house, which meant it would be flooded with sunlight pretty much from dawn to dusk. "For my prisms," she told me.

Though she wasn't picky, she did have her favorites among her many keepsakes: Her prisms. She had prisms from the gift store of the hospital where our children were born, and prisms from the god-awful road trip to the Grand Canyon we took when our youngest was still in diapers. She had a prism from every single family vacation we ever took, and many from other families' vacations, brought back by friends as souvenirs. And because they were easy to find at the last minute and everyone who knew Sally knew how much she liked them, she usually received at least one or two of them every year at Christmas and on her birthday. All things considered, I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised at the effect when she finished arranging everything in the sewing room and finally let me see it.

Trinkets covered every flat surface, and hung from most of the vertical ones. The windows though, were reserved solely for the prisms. They all had something by which they could be hung, and she divided them between the three windows. She had added an armchair to the room and as I came into the room behind her she made her way over and sat down. I looked at her then, sitting among a lifetime's worth of mementos with the rainbows of a hundred different prisms dancing all around her, and the image is one which will remain seared into my mind until the day I die. I found myself thinking that she looked at home among the rainbows, as though they were her friends and counted her as one of their own.

I understood what drove her to collect so much bric-a-brac, and she stopped trying to explain it to me after the first few years of our marriage. I saw early on that she would not be persuaded to par down her collecting or to throw any of it away, and I suppose she saw that I wasn't going to understand why it was so important to her. And so for the forty two years that we were married, I tolerated watching as every shelf and ledge in our home was overrun by what seemed to me like indistinguishable baubles, and she tolerated my mostly good natured ribbing about them. It wasn't until after she was gone that I finally understood.

On the morning of the funeral, as I was going through our closet in search of my good shoes, I came across the box she stored her old journals in. I picked one up at random and flipped through it, looking at the dates more than the actual content. They went back a long time. One of them even had entries dated before we were married. I noticed something odd though: about a quarter of the entries had a number set in parentheses next to the date. The sixth entry had the number one, the eighth entry had the number two and so on, all the way through to the most recent entries, with numbers going all the way up to 648. It was puzzling, certainly, but it faded quickly from mind in the face of my immediate grief. I put the box back where I had found it and went back to searching for my shoes, taking simple solace in the task at hand.

I moved the journals to the sewing room when it came time to clear her things from the house.

I figured I would read them one day, but not yet. It was still too soon, so I stuck them in a corner and let them lie.

The days passed, and the weeks, and eventually I began to regain some sort of shaky equilibrium.

I found myself spending most of my time in the sewing room, usually sitting in her chair and reading one of the books I had been meaning to get to for the past decade or so. It was a pleasant place, and not just because it was the place where I felt most connected to Sally. I enjoyed feeling the warmth of the sun on my legs, and watching the rainbows playing on the walls.

I was feeling particularly restless one day, about a month before the one year mark, and eventually found myself at one of the sewing room windows, leaning against the wall and idly watching the sparrows hopping and scratching in the dirt outside. After a while, I noticed that one of the prisms on the window was shimmering more brightly than the rest, and I watched the patterns of light it made for a minute or two before picking it up to look at it more closely. I saw that it had an inscription that read: Niagara Falls. It was from our honeymoon. I felt myself smiling for the first time in too long as I turned it to look at the other side. There I found an engraving depicting the falls and the cliffs and all the glorious tumult at the bottom. I studied it, every detail, thinking to use it as a memory aid and so immerse myself in memories of the week I had spent with my new wife, in a cheap cabin half a mile from the falls. As I studied the engraving, though, I noticed a scratch off to one side of the picture: it was the numeral one. It took me a minute to make the connection, but I finally got it. I went straight to the box of journals, found the first one and flipped the pages until I found the entry with the number one next to the date. It was about our honeymoon.

I cradled the precious thing in my palm, gently, as though it might shatter at any moment, and looked around the room at all of the keepsakes she had collected over the years. I reached out and carefully picked up a ceramic gecko meant to cling to the edge of a flower pot, and was unsurprised when I found the number 147 scratched into the surface of one of the feet. I gazed with something like awe at the myriad of knick-knacks and baubles that filled the room. I had no doubt that I would find a corresponding number and journal entry for every single one of them.

She had used these things to chronicle our life together. All the hardships and the victories, all the anxiety and all the love that we had shared, a lifetime of it, was here in these porcelain figurines and gaudy paperweights. It was all here.

I held both prism and ceramic gecko to my chest as I sank back into the chair, overwhelmed and unable to do anything about the salty wetness on my cheeks.

I sat there for a long time, staring at the room around me and seeing it as it was all those years ago, with Sally smiling at me from her chair, surrounded by the memorabilia of a lifetime while the rainbows danced upon her.

Inspired by "Sally Weber" by Donna Granata



Horace Bristol

FIRST PLACE: ADULT: POEM

American Dreams

By Dominga Zambrano

American dreams
Dissolve to dust
On furrowed brows
Weathered with shame

Battered hands
Seek empty-pocket
Shelter
Vain attempt
To outsmart the devil

What life is left
To sign away
The young go
Hollow, hungry, and bare

Cry out
To something greater than pain
Humbled hearts
Cry out, cry out

Inspired by "Joad Family Applying for Relief" by Horace Bristol



Stephen Schafer

SECOND PLACE: ADULT: POEM

Hosanna

By Maggie Westland

As filled with grace
As apse your arches
Arch

Clasp cars embrace
In graceful curve
Reflecting
Church

The wash you splash
More to adorn than
Bless

Is reminiscent
Of a holy font
Confessional

This place of
Chrome desire
Now whistle
Clean

Absolves all, cruises
Avenues renewed
In light

Inspired by "Carwash on the Avenue" by Stephen Schafer



HONORABLE MENTION: ADULT: POEM

Gift Of A Ball

By Howard Smith

Gave a ball to a friend.
Sort of a late birthday gift,
with some heft.

Most, I learned would deride
such a gift.
What can one do with a steel ball,
ten feet around?
Not something to play baseball,
would break the bat.
Too big for basketball,
would not do if rolled on a foot.
Besides, the birthday person was almost blind.
Hard to enjoy a ball of steel,
regardless how pretty, when it's hard to see.

Of course, all that is wrong, for
the first desire upon finding something beautiful,
a painting, a statue, a rose,
is to touch the wonder.
At times, it's hard to keep hands off,
for sensations become enjoyment
to the mind.
The cool, hard, smooth surface,
or warm, soft, yielding skin over body,
each has it's own pleasure.

—continued on next page

Hugging the steel ball can also invoke
imagination, visions and memories.
The grasp of a small hand, the feel of
the rich fur of a beloved pet,
touch of soft warmth between lovers,
the warmth of a first kiss, cold nose against a cheek,
hot breath against the ear and neck.

Clearly, everyone should have access
to a large, steel ball, to hold in times of stress,
bewilderment, or depression.
The feel of something rigid and heavy
in a world of undesired change
can invoke the confidence of permanence
and calm frazzled passions like incense.

The ball should be large enough, however,
so it can't be swallowed
at those times when desire confronts sense.

Inspired by "Large Ball – Fagan Canyon" by John Nichols



Donna Granata

FIRST PLACE: YOUTH: SHORT STORY

The Synesthete

by Sofia Felino

Ana Scott sat waiting in the dark terminal. Not a sound withered in the cold air. Suddenly, the subway rushed by. A flurry of colors appeared where there just a second ago had been a great black nothing.

Ana had synesthesia, the colored hearing type. Synesthesia is a rare condition very few people get. "You have to be born with it," Ana had once explained to her nosy brother's wife, Ginny. "You can't have an operation to get it, or have it delivered by chicken pox."

"Well, I don't know," Ginny murmured cockily. "I want it, and I get what I want. But you must be bored with it?"

"Aaah, no!" Ana cried. Then realizing she was being rather loud, she said calmly, "Well, of course someone out there would rather have the type where, say, you taste peppermint when you see a red flower."

"I love peppermint!" cried Ginny's daughter, Bathsheba. Ana just nodded slowly.

Ana had often been teased, because her earrings were always dangling a long ways down. She wore them to see the lavender curves and spirals appear in the air with the swish, swish of the earrings lunging forward, backward, forward, backward.

She shivered and the rustle of her earrings and coat formed a strong, brown curve as she boarded the subway.

To Ana's great astonishment, a young man who looked like a surfer winked at her! She was at loss for words and all she could do was smile. She sat down and he smiled back. She let out an exhale and a few green dots before she could raise an eyebrow and the corners of her mouth. They were returned by yet another smile.

As Ana got off, Surfer Dude came up to her. He shook her hand, and gave her a hug. She was so surprised she ran to her school.

Ana was a teacher. Her school name was Ms. Scott. She taught a room full of first graders, who all knew about her synesthesia and earrings, and absolutely worshiped her. When she got to class, Lissy Mourtimouth whispered, "Ms. Scott, you have something on your back."

Puzzled, Miss Scott reached to her back. Sure enough, there was a thin piece of paper taped to her back. "How did this get there?" she wondered aloud. The note said:

Dear Pretty Woman,

Call me! My number is 658-4957. I love your earrings.

They make me taste the salt on the ocean. I love this taste.

Wishing you a happy week,

"Surfer Dude" Jake

"What was that?" asked Lissy's twin, Lilly.

"A note."

"Who was it from?" the twins asked in unison.

"Oh," Ana Scott said, "A friend."

Inspired by "Sally Weber" by Donna Granata

By Sofia Felino
Age 10/Grade 5



SECOND PLACE: YOUTH: SHORT STORY

Carwash on the Avenue

By Jocelyn Munoz

I am a carwash that lives in Ventura. I am the most popular carwash ever. I love when cars go through me because they tickle me. I also like when they put money into me because I could hear the tinkle of the coins. I love washing cars.

The bubbles are always around me making a mess, but it is always fun. People love me because I wash cars good. When I'm done washing cars I always hear good compliments about me, and I see the sparkle on every car.

Everyday I see long lines of dirty cars. I am always happy to do my job. One day when I was washing a car, soap and water started shooting out everywhere. I didn't know what to do, but then the alarm button went on. The boss came out of his office and turned me off.

A couple of months later I was turned on again the carwash was empty. There was just one man with a toolbox in his hand. He had fixed me. He was taking off a sign that said for sale. He had already put his stuff into the old boss's office.

For weeks they had been waiting for cars. Finally one car came and I was happy. I heard a lady in her car tell the new boss that she remembered coming here and asked why the carwash had been closed. Then he told her what had happened. She said she would try to tell everyone in Ventura that the best carwash was back. The next day there was long lines again. Now I am the happiest carwash in the world.

Inspired by "Carwash on the Avenue" by Stephen Schaffer

By Jocelyn Munoz
Grade 6



HONORABLE MENTION: YOUTH: SHORT STORY

Tony's Pizza

By Alejandra Contreras

"I'm hungry," I told my mom and she asked me if I wanted pizza and I said yes.

She asked me, "what kind?"

"Well I don't know maybe Tony's pizza" I said.

"Get ready so I can take you over there to buy some," she said.

When we got there I told my mom, "Let's get three boxes". And when we got it home I ate two slices, my sister ate one, my other sister ate two, and my mom ate one. Then for dinner we ate pizza and finished that box, so we only had two more boxes.

The next day at lunch at home I said to my mom, "Do we still have the finest pizza ever. I want one slice." She got one slice out and put it in the microwave, and then she got it and gave it to me when it was done.

At dinner that night, we finished the two boxes. The next day, we bought ten boxes and tried finishing them. But we couldn't. I still tried to finish them, but I couldn't.

Then the next day, I went down to the store and bought soda and candy. When I got home, I tried finishing and I finished at least 5 boxes. Then my other sisters ate the other five. Then my mom said, "We can only get 5 boxes when we buy Tony's Pizza because 10 is a lot of boxes of pizza."

The next day I went to the pizzeria and ordered 5 boxes but they were all out. All they had was two boxes and I took those. All we had for those 2 days for dinner was pizza. "I so love Tony's pizza," said my sister.

"Me too," I said, "but because I ate too much pizza I couldn't look at another pizza for a while."

Inspired by "Tony's Pizza" by Stephen Schäfer

By Alejandra Contreras
Grade 4



HONORABLE MENTION: YOUTH: SHORT STORY

Tony's Pizza

By Lupita Perez

People are walking in and out of the pizzeria. The pizza smells magnificent. There is a girl outside on a bench, alone, eating pizza. The trees as green as broccoli. Then comes a guy and starts talking to the lovely girl. They fall in love. The pizzeria is painted red and yellowish. There is an "OPEN" sign. Small little place, but with delicious pizza. Bushes, trees, plants, so beautiful surroundings. Tables and chairs being used. Benches outside waiting to be sat on. About 85 degrees. People inside the pizzeria having a wonderful time. Now people are even doing karaoke. Looks like palm trees are waving in the breeze. No grass just dirt. There's a puddle from the rain. Now someone just invited me for some pizza. I'm enjoying it. It's as delicious as ice-cream with whip cream.

Inspired by "Tony's Pizza" by Stephen Schaefer

By Lupita Perez
Grade 6



HONORABLE MENTION: YOUTH: SHORT STORY

Tony's Pizza

By Daniel Vargas

Mmmmmmm! I love Tony's Pizza. So good, juicy, pizza with pepperoni, mushrooms, olives, and more toppings, it's my favorite pizza in the world. Mmmm mmm mmm! Delicious pizza, can't wait until I taste it. Small store, but big in taste. One day I went to Tony's Pizzeria and they gave me a magic pizza for being the 100th customer. They told me to jump on it and hold on. I jumped on the pizza and it rushed me to Pizza City. I then jumped off and the minute I got off they offered me a job as a chief. I told them I had to think about it.

The next day I woke up in the royal room and a police officer was standing at the door and he said that you took my job. They offered me the same deal, now you have to pay. He had a pizza sword. He tried to hit me with the sword but I blocked it. I got out of my bed and ran out the door. Then I saw millions of pizza swords. I cautiously picked up a sword and as quick as a flash he dashed over here and he almost sliced my head off with a slice of pizza. Next thing I know I was engaged in a sword lock, he pushed me and pushed me, however I regained power and I threw him to the floor. I slipped trying to run to the palace. I got up and ran to the palace where we continued the brutal battle. I couldn't wait until the battle was done because I always hated fighting even with my sister and brother. While we were battling I noticed a black and white shirt underneath his police uniform. I soon took off his police uniform and discovered he was the all time evil pizza stealer. He stole pizza from pizza city the other day. I quickly contacted the real police and they arrested him. I soon went back to the cook and of course he asked me if I thought about it. I told him with a sigh, "I'm sorry, but not right now. I don't want to deal with this every day when I wake up."

So I went back to Tony's Pizza and I asked them for a job. They said sure. From that day on I'm working for Tony. I never went back to Pizza City again. I wonder if one day I could open my own pizzeria.

Inspired by "Tony's Pizza" by Stephen Schäfer

By Daniel Vargas
Grade 4



FIRST PLACE: YOUTH: POEM

Carwash on Ventura Avenue

By Chris Medrano

The rushing water down the drain
The woooooosh of the vacuum cleaning out the cars
The high-powered nozzle, so strong it could blow off your
finger
The high ceiling that seem ever so dirty
The air freshener machine, dented by old crashes as big as Mt. Everest
All the cars that come through like on assembly line
The rusted bolts as old as my grandpa
The things of the carwash
Make the carwash

Inspired by "Carwash on the Avenue" by Stephen Schaffer

By Chris Medrano
Grade 6



SECOND PLACE: YOUTH: POEM

Large Ball - Fagan Canyon

By Misael Ponce

In a valley lies a lonely wrecked ball
beside it sits an ancient shack
They've both been abandoned, like
bullion that's lost its flavor
When it was new
the wrecking ball was a worker of
demolition
big as an elephant or strong as an ox
Now it's just junk
The shed, when first built
had
hoped to last for life
with a proud owner
Now they lie empty
with only each other for company

Inspired by "Large Ball – Fagan Canyon" by John Nichols

By Misael Ponce
Grade 6



HONORABLE MENTION: YOUTH: POETRY

Joad Family Applying for Relief

By Naythan Martinez

It came
It came without warning
I didn't see anything

We need help
We are broke
It wiped us out of crops

It's watching us
We are helplessly doomed
It came without warning

I am frightened with grief
I am angry and furious
I'm scared and sad

Help us
We are broke
We need help please!

It came
It came without warning
We didn't see anything

Inspired by "Joad Family Applying for Relief" by Horace Bristol

By Naythan Martinez
Grade 6



HONORABLE MENTION: YOUTH: POETRY

They speak the Names of the Mysterious Rainbow over her head

By Matthew Hammond

The Shining Rainbow of Dreams and Ideas flow like a clear river through the mind
It is the color that shows all shades
It's the Sound of All Things, the harmony of the Universe
A face appears, some of the colors seep from the black curls
She feels the colors and lets them wash over her, they are soft, yet hard, solid,
Than mist, all blending together
She hears whispers, shouts, harsh voices, calm words
They speak the Names of the Mysterious Rainbow over her head
She listens carefully to some of the Names
Imagination, Creation, Thoughts, The Unseen, The Unknown, The Universe,
Beginning, End, Light, Night, All, Everything, Shining Star, Glowing Moon,
Bright Sun, The World, Peace, War, and many other Names that could go on
until the hand that tosses the Hourglass of Time from one hand to the next
slips and destroys Time
She also sees visions, The Constitution of All, Everything Equal
She sees how Everything no matter how small or big is a part of That
Rainbow and helps complete it

Inspired by "Sally Weber" by Donna Granata

By Matthew Hammond
Grade 6



**HONORABLE MENTION:
YOUTH: POETRY**

**Large Ball -
Fagan Canyon**

By Hanna Wishart

They know it's time to go
Till this day my shack
stands
The ball now its best
friend
I peer out my window and
see them under the oak
tree
Like two best friends for
life

Inspired by "Large Ball – Fagan Canyon" by John Nichols

By Hanna Wishart
Grade 6

The City of Ventura

Municipal *Art* Collection

In May of 1999, the City Council established the Municipal Art Acquisition Program to document the history of visual art in Ventura through the annual purchase of important works of art created by area artists. The collection provides increased access to art of the highest quality and of distinctive merit through its display in the public areas of City Hall and other municipal buildings. Featured artworks must be created by artists residing in Ventura County or who have made a direct contribution to the history of art in Ventura County.

The Municipal Art Acquisition Committee, a sub-committee of the Public Art Commission, oversees the purchase of works in a variety of artistic media. The Public Art Commission plans to expand the collection in future years.

Ventura's Municipal Art Collection is exhibited in City Hall, 501 Poli Street, in the downtown Cultural District during regular business hours, closed alternate Fridays.

For more information visit
www.cityofventura.net/publicart or call 805/658-4793.



Hanna Lore Hombordy



Richard Phelps



Teal Rowe



Chloe Murdock



Richard Amend



Gayel Childress